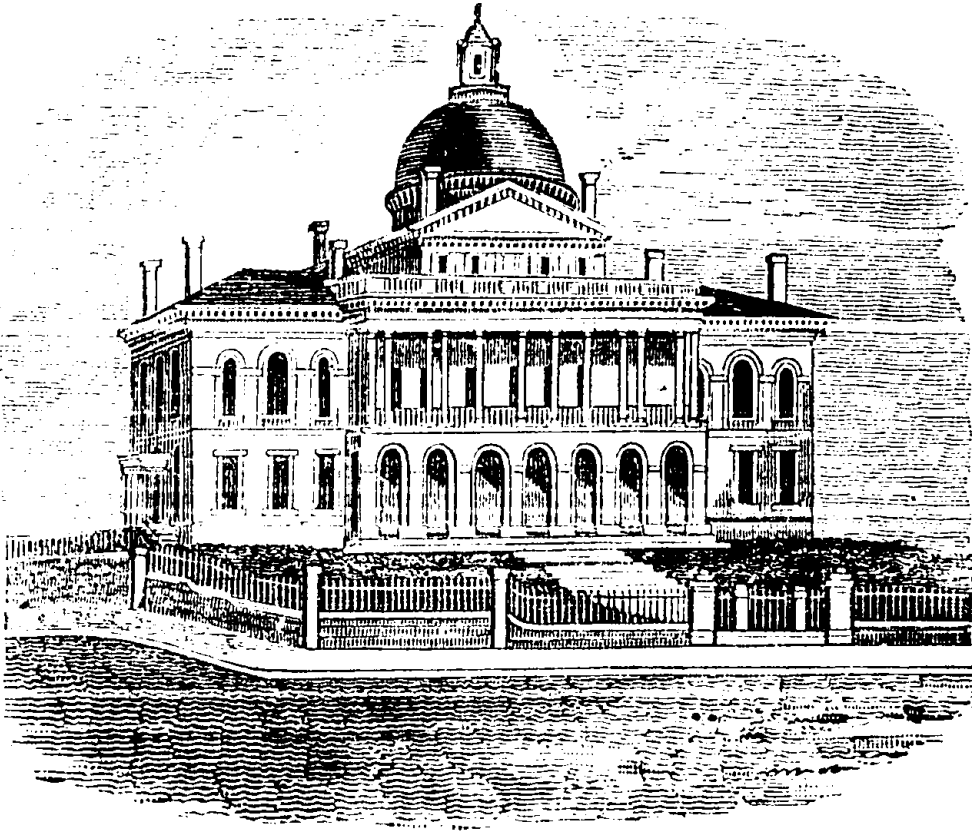


HISTORY OF BOSTON.



BY ROBIN CARVER.

BOSTON :

LILLY, WAIT, COLMAN, AND HOLDEN.

1834.

CHAPTER XIV.

John Hancock. Proclamation of peace. Josiah Quincy, Jr. His reply to a menacing letter. His visit to England. Death on his voyage home. James Otis. His derangement. Residence at Andover. Death.

1. FROM the period of the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, the scene of war was removed to a distance. The inhabitants, however, continued throughout the contest of eight years, to preserve the spirit which they had shown at its commencement. The proscribed John Hancock, who had the honor of placing the first signature to the Declaration of American Independence, was the first governor chosen under the new constitution of Massachusetts.

2. The proclamation of congress, which announced the peace, was received at Boston, on the twenty-third of April 1783. It was read at noon-day, from the balcony of the old town-house. A large number of the citizens were collected on this occasion, and gave evidence of their joy by

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loud shouts and cheers. Cannon were then fired from Fort Hill and from the Castle.

3. I shall now tell you a few stories, of some of the men, who were most distinguished in the times of the revolution, and in the times which followed it. You have already heard of Josiah Quincy, Jr, and James Otis. These men were unfortunately not spared long to their country, in the period of her greatest troubles.

4. Josiah Quincy, Jr was born in Boston, in February 1744. He received his education at Harvard College, and pursued the study of the law in his native town. His zeal and ardor, against every encroachment of the mother country, soon made him conspicuous. He spoke and wrote against all her usurpations, with great talent and eloquence.

5. I have already told you of his defence of the soldiers, who were concerned in the massacre of the fifth of March. This was the most trying event of his life. It is that which now reflects the greatest honor on him, though for a time it rather clouded his popularity. Until 1772, he continued in the active pursuit of his profession, and in circulating his generous and patriotic opinions.

6. His health had now been so much injured by incessant application, that he was obliged to abandon business altogether. It was necessary for him to seek a milder climate, and he paid a visit to South Carolina. On his return he again resumed his labors, and prepared his chief political work for publication.

7. When this work was advertised as in the press, Mr Quincy received a letter, in which he was threatened with loss of life, and of his estate, if he published it. To these menaces, a request was added, which conjured him to abandon his present course, and devote his talents to the interests of the British government.

8. Mr Quincy published in one of the papers of the day, a reply to this insolent communication. 'The danger and the wrongs of my country,' he said, 'are to me equally apparent. In all my public exertions, I feel a sense of right and duty, that not only satisfies my conscience, but inspires my zeal. While I have this sentiment, I shall persevere, till my understanding is convinced of its error, — a conviction that will not be wrought by the arm of power, or the hand of an assassin.'

9. In the fall of 1774, Mr Quincy was prevailed upon to sail for London, in the hope that his presence there might promote the interests of his native land. There he became acquainted with some of the most eminent men of England, and labored with unwearied diligence, for the service of his countrymen. During this time, he maintained a constant correspondence with the friends of liberty at home.

10. He remained in London till early in the spring of 1775, when he embarked for America. It was thought that his return was desirable, for the interests of the cause in which he had engaged. Though his health was so much impaired, that he was convinced his only hope of recovery

was by remaining in England, he thought it his duty to sacrifice even life itself, for his country. The sacrifice, however, was in vain. In sight of his dear native land, but before he reached her shores, he died, a martyr to his love of country.

11. The fate of James Otis was more melancholy. I have told you of the cowardly assault upon him in the coffee-house, and of his generous conduct afterwards. In 1770 he retired into the country for his health. The wounds he had received were thought to have occasioned partial derangement. His mind became seriously affected, and continued so with intervals of reason, till his death. Sometimes he was full of humor and eccentricity; again, he would be almost in a state of madness.

12. He passed the last two years of his life at Andover. After residing there some time, his health was supposed to be completely restored, and he returned and resumed his professional pursuits in Boston. At this visit, he argued a case in court, in which he is said to have displayed much ability, though less than usual. He was induced to go back to Andover, and in about six weeks afterwards was killed by a stroke of lightning. This melancholy event happened in the sixtieth year of his age, May 23, 1783.